

Staff Matters

A newsletter for employees from Human Resources

From the HR Director

By Gwynn Simpson

Is Succession Planning Right for Maricopa County?

Most of us have heard the term 'Succession Planning', but how many really know what it means? If all of the top managers and directors left Maricopa County tomorrow, would we survive? Without a succession plan we would simply be in the business of replacing vacant positions.

The advantage of a succession plan is that "it anticipates changes in management, rather than just filling empty posts as they occur" (William Rothwell, "Author of Effective Succession Planning" and Professor of Workforce Education, Penn State University). Succession Planning is one of the many goals of the County Administrator and the Management Team.

Recent surveys conducted by HR consulting firms found 94% of the firms polled had not adequately prepared employees to step up to

leadership positions. Given that the average age of our county employees hovers somewhere between the ranges of 43 to 45, Maricopa County is forced to evaluate its bench strength.

One of the tools the county is employing to prepare employees for leadership roles is training. Through programs such as the new Executive Development for Governmental Employees (EDGE) Program, employees will experience staff development processes that will help them gain a competitive edge in the line-up for succession.

It is a proven fact that organizations that use a formal training process to help employees advance are consistently high performing organizations. "By identifying the abilities and qualities needed to move up and by communicating these to the labor force, employers

can increase retention and performance across all levels of the organizations" (Susan Wells, HR Magazine).

Next year with the assistance of the new PeopleSoft HRIS System, Maricopa County will begin developing a formal succession plan. Formal succession plans get results by identifying potential leaders and tracking their performance and career development. In order to compete and to provide the service delivery systems needed for the future of Maricopa County, we must have the necessary intellectual capital to be effective. Is Succession Planning right for Maricopa County? Human Resources thinks it is and believes the future of the County lies with those employees who value education and training.

For further information on the EDGE Program, contact Mary Lee Madison or Jana Ruth in Human Resources Staff Development.



2003 Combined Charitable Campaign Extended!

The Combined Charitable Campaign has been extended until the end of November. This means you can continue to participate in Casual Day and the Heart event until November 30!

Don't miss out on these upcoming events:

Bricks For Life



Bricks for Life

Make a donation to the United Way Valley of the Sun Fund and have your brick placed in one of several public County areas.



CoEd Softball Tournament

Tournament 1
November 8, 2003

Tournament 2
November 29, 2003



Golf Tournament

December 6, 2003

Profile on...Mitigation Specialists

A relatively new position, the mitigation specialist, has taken on a significant role in the criminal justice field, particularly in the **defense** of capital cases. As established by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Wiggins v. Smith* and the American Bar Association Guidelines, effective legal representation in capital cases must include "efforts to discover all reasonably available mitigating evidence and evidence to rebut any aggravating evidence" It is to this task that the mitigation specialist is committed.

As part of the defense team of attorneys and investigator(s), the mitigation specialist begins working the moment the case is assigned. He/she must establish a relationship of trust with the



client in order to obtain critical, sensitive, and often embarrassing or humiliating information from both client and family members. Records must be collected and interviews completed. Trained in interviewing skills and accomplished at recognizing physical and mental health issues, the mitigation specialist generally will have a graduate degree in social work and several years of clinical field experience.

Although the culmination of a

mitigation specialist's efforts often is an in-depth mitigation presentation at the sentencing phase of the client's trial some 18 months after the case began, the specialist's work may have even greater significance in the early development of the defense. Frequently the presentation of well-researched and documented mitigation evidence to the prosecutor can result in the decision not to seek the death penalty, saving both the state and defense considerable resources and emotional investments.

These positions have been funded for the offices of the Public Defender, Legal Defender, Legal Advocate, and Contract Counsel.

Teamwork!

Dan Brenden of the Office of County Counsel, County Attorney's Office, found teamwork was the key to successfully racing 160 miles through the dense Amazon Jungle. Forty-six of the world's fastest adventure racers from eleven countries competed in a challenge that had never been attempted. But the real competition was not from other runners but from



After two days, competitors realized that the only way they were going to complete the race was to help one another. Runners tripped on hidden roots and vines while negotiating an invisible path through muddy swamps and across logs traversing rivers. Racers encountered

poisonous snakes and tarantulas the size of dinner plates while enduring suffocating humidity and the unrelenting tropic heat. They even encountered a jaguar, only to find out later there were actually four! The fiercest of all attackers were fire ants that inflicted an immediate stinging bite.

Although racers and countries remained competitive, runners were now offering each other helping hands over dangerous crossings, sharing food and encouraging one another through the hostile tropic environment. One account stated that the racers were in a dreadful condition yet they continued. Seven racers did not finish.

Dan commented that we don't have to race 160 miles through the jungle to benefit from teamwork. Dan completed the race, placing 18th overall.

The History of Maricopa County

Vince Murray, Maricopa County's "Unofficial" Historian

In Maricopa County's first election, one of the most contentious issues was the location of the county seat. The two major players for the prize were the "new" Town of Phoenix, a freshly surveyed townsite with little more standing than the Hancock Store, and Mill City, which was once known as the Phoenix Settlement.

The Salt River Valley Town Association tried to hedge their bet on the new Phoenix townsite with a declaration that block 65, between modern 1st and 2nd Avenues and Jefferson and Madison Streets, would be reserved for county purposes. Not to be outdone, the residents of Mill City, headed by Swilling and Hellings also used every effort to have their place chosen as the seat.

According to a history of the county written in 1883, Jack Swilling was "breathing forth threatenings and slaughter" to all who opposed him in the matter. Swilling hired nearly every laborer in the valley and was keeping them at the mill, well provided with "*agua ardiente*" (whiskey) to keep them content and to prevent any tampering before the election. There were also twenty "good" (armed) men on hand at Mill City to prevent any problems from arising. Meanwhile, at William Hancock's store in Phoenix there were thirty loaded rifles ready for a "case of law and order." The election was over quickly, Phoenix winning the county seat over Mill City by 212 to 150.

After the election, Swilling made no attempt to bottle up his feelings. He had left the polls and was at a local establishment when he met up with a person who didn't vote his way. Keeping to his promise, Swilling unloaded a double-barreled shotgun into the other man's midsection. Fortunately for the victim, the gun was loaded with birdshot and he wasn't critically injured.

Local ranchers Jake and Andrew Starar, who were at the polls, heard the gunshot and went to investigate. Nearby, they found the wounded man laying for Swilling with a gun of his own. Jake took the victim back to his home to tend to the wounds. Then the Starars formed a "committee of citizens" that informed Swilling that the next time he committed a lawless act, he would "die like a dog, without judge or jury." Swilling apparently heeded this advice and subsequently left the Salt River Valley.

The location of the county seat was the most important aspect of the county's first election, however other matters were also on the slate, such as the new county officers. Though many of these positions have been retained over the last thirteen decades, most of their functions have changed considerably. At least they no longer draw straws.



Jack Swilling, circa 1870, from a photo of the Arizona State Archives Historic Photograph Collection. Used with permission.

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Interviews with EAGLE Implementers

Continued from October

Staff Matters
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of the
Human Resources
Department of
Maricopa County
which is solely
responsible for its
content.

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Please send
comments, suggestions,
and news items
by the first of the month
to **Human Resources**
at 602 506-3233.

What does it take for the Eagle project to be successful? What training will County employees need? How will their success be measured?

"Employee's training needs will vary depending on what functions they'll be using in PeopleSoft. However, since the new system will include employee self-service in Phase Two, everyone will need to become familiar with the web-based screens they'll use to update their personal information. PeopleSoft has spent a lot of time and effort to make their modules user-friendly, and the County purchased a number of the on-line training courses employees will need to quickly get "up to speed" on the new system.



"A multi-tier support structure will be established to help employees as they start using the new system. The success of our training efforts will be measured by the quantity and nature of the help calls that are placed to the support team. We will look for trends in the help calls received and "fine-tune" our training efforts if specific problem areas or common misunderstandings are noted.

Paul Allsing,
Acting Chief Information Officer

What is the role of each stakeholder group in the Eagle project and how will they know what to do?

"The stakeholder groups don't necessarily have roles in the Eagle implementation. The stakeholder groups are defined by what the impact of the Eagle project is to them. The definition of the stakeholder group is for the purpose of the project. It tells us what, when and how we need to communicate to particular stakeholder groups. It also tells us which of the groups will have changed roles and/or responsibilities that result from the project. This helps us to determine who needs to be trained and what they need to be trained on and when. These "end-users" affected, (those who will use PeopleSoft to perform their work), will be notified in a timely manner as to when training will occur, and what the training agenda will be so they can plan accordingly with their managers."



Andrea Joseph-Nickels
Ciber Change Management Lead

What can the Eagle Project do for the Maricopa County customer – the taxpayer?

"I see the application that results from the Eagle project providing two primary benefits to County citizens. The first is that the system will permit employees to track their time against PAS codes. This information can be used in the resource allocation decision-making process to make County government more effective. The second is that the application will accurately track all facets of employee compensation/benefit activity and provide detailed reports. This will permit interested citizen access to information and increase their confidence in the County's operations. That's how I see it."



Wes Baysinger
Director, Materials Management